

Appendix G

Leave No Trace Principles



With increasing visitor use, both day and overnight, it is important to minimize our impacts and Leave No Trace of our visits into the backcountry. Please learn, practice, and pass on Leave No Trace skills and ethics to those you come in contact with. The following Leave No Trace principles will help protect precious backcountry resources.

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE.

- Know and obey the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Be physically and mentally ready for your trip.
- Know the ability of every member of your group.
- Be informed of current weather conditions and other area information.
- Know and accept risks associated with backcountry experiences.
- Take responsibility for yourself and your group.
- Always leave an itinerary with someone at home.
- Choose proper equipment and clothing in subdued colors.
- Plan your meals and repack food into reusable containers.

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES.

While Traveling...

- Stay on designated trails and hike single file. Never shortcut switchbacks.
- When traveling crosscountry, choose the most durable surfaces available: rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow. Spread out so that you don't grind a path where one didn't exist before.
- When you stop to rest, be careful not to mash vegetation. Sit on rocks, logs, or in clearings.

At Camp...

- Be careful where you pitch your tent. Use the tent pad at the campsite, and camp in the camp area indicated on your permit.
- Restrict activities to the area where vegetation is compacted or absent.
- Use a large plastic water container to collect water so you don't need to make frequent trips to the water source.

PROPERLY DISPOSE OF WASTE.

- There are pit toilets at many backcountry sites. Use them.
- If there are no pit toilets nearby, urinate or defecate at least 200 feet (70 adult paces) from water, camp, or trails.
- Urinate in rocky places that won't be damaged by wildlife who dig for salts and minerals found in urine.
- Deposit human waste in catholes dug 6-8 inches deep. Carry a small garden trowel or lightweight scoop for digging. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished, or pack out solid waste.
- Use toilet paper sparingly and pack it out along with sanitary napkins, and tampons in an airtight container. Consider using natural toilet paper such as a smooth rock or soft pinecone.

- Wash your dishes and yourself at least 200 feet (70 adult paces) from water sources, and use small amounts, if any, of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.
- Strain food scraps from wash water and pack them out
- Pack everything you bring into the backcountry back out.
- Inspect your campsite for trash and evidence of your stay. Pack out all trash... *Yours and others'.*

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND.

- Treat our natural heritage with respect. Leave plants, rocks, and historical artifacts as you find them.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site should not be necessary. Don't build structures or dig trenches.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Speak softly and avoid making loud noises. Allow for others to enjoy the peace and solitude of being in the backcountry.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS.

- Campfires are prohibited in the Rocky Mountain National Park wilderness except at certain designated campsites where metal fire rings are provided.
- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. *Always* use a lightweight, portable stove for cooking. A campfire is a luxury, not a necessity.
- Enjoy the sounds and wonders of the darkness, or use a candle lantern instead of a fire.
- Where fires are permitted, use the metal fire grate. Don't scar large rocks by using them to enlarge the fire area.
- Gather *dead and down sticks*, no larger than an adult's wrist, from a wide area, and leave them in their natural form until you are ready to burn them. Scatter any unused sticks.
- Do not snap branches off live, dead, or downed trees.
- Put out campfires completely.
- Remove, and pack out, all unburned trash from the fire grate. Scatter the cold ashes over a large area well away from camp.

RESPECT WILDLIFE.

- Enjoy wildlife at a distance.
- Never feed wildlife.
- Protect wildlife, hang your food and scented items securely.
- Minimize noise.
- Avoid sensitive habitat.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS.

- Visit the backcountry in small parties. More people means more impact.
- Avoid popular areas during times of high use.
- Avoid conflicts.
- Minimize noise.
- Keep a low profile.
- Take breaks and rest well off the trail, on a durable surface of course.
- Yield to horse traffic.

For more information on Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics contact the Backcountry Office or call LNT, Inc. at 1-800-332-4100. It's easy to enjoy and protect the backcountry simultaneously.

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